

experiences as a supply officer during World War II, notably in one of the units that liberated the Nazi concentration camp, Dachau.

Ralph Leseburg is 86 years old and lives in St. Anthony, ID with his beloved wife of 66 years, Wanda. Before visiting my office, he returned to Dachau, Germany on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the camp's liberation by the Americans. After taking part in the commemoration ceremony, he stopped in Washington, DC to visit the World War II Memorial and pay respects to his fallen comrades.

Ralph was drafted in 1944 when he was a young married man with three children living in Layton, UT. That young man was evident in the wizened gentleman who sat in my office some months ago, his experiences of those difficult times surprisingly vivid in his blue eyes. He spent time in France and then in Germany assigned to the 42nd Quartermaster Company of the Army. He remembers the bombings that cleared Wersberg, Germany, and bringing in supplies of food, clothing and ammunition for the soldiers.

Clearly, his most difficult time was to come, for it was just months later on April 29, 1945, around 6 or 7 p.m. in the evening that his company followed the troops into the liberated camps with two truckloads of food for the survivors. Up to this point in the interview, Ralph had shared his experiences in great detail, telling of dates, places and times with remarkable acuity. When asked about what he saw that night, Ralph paused for a long minute and said, "Well, it's just something you don't like to talk about." At that moment, he was thousands of miles and many years away from my office in the Dirksen Building. His blue eyes, glinting with the shine of old tears, reflected the stark horror of that day, the memory too overwhelming to put to words.

Ralph continued to serve until 1946, when he returned to his wife and children and civilian life. Looking back, he said that he remembered paying attention to the lifestyle of the people in the countries where he served, and remarked that "We are blessed to be in this nation, a nation of human rights and humanitarian service." When asked about serving his country, Ralph said only this: "It wasn't easy to leave my wife and children, but I served my country when I was called, and I knew why I was called." I would like to offer my sincere thanks and gratitude for Ralph and his family for their sacrifice and service so many years ago. It was a tremendous honor for me to have this particular member of "the greatest generation" in my office that day.●

HONORING NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY

● Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I rise today in honor of National Adoption Day.

If the events of the last few months have done nothing else, they have re-

minded us of the importance of family, friends, and faith in a time of crisis. Not a moment has gone by without an image of a mother searching for her son or a daughter looking for her grandmother. Families bring people together and make it possible for them to make it through these times of uncertainty and hardship.

Now, more than ever, our focus is on bringing families together: we must rebuild, create, and transform these families. National Adoption Day is a way for this goal to be realized. It is in its sixth year and helps the dream of a permanent family come true through courts, judges, attorneys, and advocates who help to finalize adoptions.

On this day, I would like to paint two pictures for you all: In 227 cities and 45 States, at courthouses, churches, museums, parks, and beautiful public places all over the country, at least 4,000 children will find forever families, and dreams of thousands of adults will be realized. I want you to picture what happens on this fall day, children running, laughing, and playing with their new parent. Think about a girl or boy planning their special outfit and joyously awaiting the family celebration. Imagine the excitement welling up inside of a child as he or she looks into their new parent's eyes and knows they are finally part of a family. They will never dread the sound of a car coming to take them away again or wonder where they will lay their heads or which school they will be moved to. The other picture is dramatically different: In Louisiana alone, there are 4,424 children in foster care and 581,000 children nationwide waiting to be adopted. Only 10 percent of these children will ever be adopted. They have not had the luxury of their own room, a stable school environment, or a constant adult in their lives.

Most of these children entered into State custody because their parents were either unable or unwilling to care for them. What today is all about is transforming barriers into foundations. Tonight they will go home to their forever families. In speaking about forever families, I want to bring your attention to two of the many children in Louisiana that need forever families.

Many children in the foster care system are teenagers and have more difficulty being adopted. These beautiful children are just waiting to flourish with the right parent's guidance. Reva, for example, is a 15-year-old, reserved young woman who loves playing board games. She also is great at basketball and swimming. Reva does have a diagnosis of major depression and posttraumatic stress disorder more than likely exacerbated by her time in foster care.

D'Vonte is a 13-year-old vivacious young man who loves to dance and listen to music on his CD player. His favorite activities are working on art projects and going swimming during the summer months. As a true Louisianan, he loves gumbo and is a caring and affectionate child.

I could stand here every day for the next month and talk about each child that needs to be adopted out of foster care. The bottom line is that each of these children, from 1 day old to 22 years old, needs permanency. They all need a loving, nurturing family that will help them to grow, bring out their unique personalities, and transform them into beautiful adults.

Today, on National Adoption Day, I have faith that this can be done and we must continue to be the catalysis. The miracle of adoption cannot be explained, but the loving parents that are holding their children for the first time today are living examples of how dreams can be realized. As an adoptive mother myself, I cannot really explain the miracle of it, but I can only take a moment to offer my most humble thanks, gratitude, and appreciation to all those across the Nation who have given their Saturday to help find waiting children safe and loving homes.

Let us continue to remember, when National Adoption Month and Day ends that there are still thousands of children like D'Vonte and Reva who need that sense of permanency. I challenge Congress to make these children their first priority and to help them to finally realize that dream.●

TRIBUTE TO HILTON A. WICK

● Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about Hilton Wick, a great Vermonter who was recently honored at a dedication ceremony in Burlington, VT. As a token of thanks for his tireless fundraising efforts on behalf of Fletcher Allen Health Care, the plaza in front of Fletcher Allen's Ambulatory Care Center will now bear Hilton's name. For decades, Hilton Wick has committed his talents and energy to improving his community, raising awareness, and inspiring involvement on a wide variety of community development projects. Not only Burlington but all of Vermont can be grateful for his outstanding leadership and enormous generosity.

I would like to share with my colleagues an article from the October 29, 2005, edition of the Burlington Free Press which magnificently describes the contributions of Hilton Wick. I ask that the article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Burlington Free Press, Oct. 29, 2005]

HILTON WICK GIVES HIS ALL TO COMMUNITY

It is a fitting tribute to Burlington's Hilton Wick that the plaza in front of Fletcher Allen Health Care's new Ambulatory Care Center is being named after him.

The dedication for the Hilton A. Wick Plaza on Sunday honors a man who has been one of the most generous and steadfast community builders Burlington has known.

When the hospital's Renaissance Project was in its darkest hours, Wick persevered with community fund-raising efforts despite the adversity, convinced that the goal of a